THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Economic liberalisation can affect prices of essential commodities in different ways. For example, liberalisation of imports of essential commodities generally helps to contain the rise in prices of essential commodities. On the other hand, liberalisation of export controls can, in the short trun, put upward pressure on prices. Economic liberalisation and price movements are closely related. In the short-run, depending upon forces of supply and demand, prices may sometimes rise. In the long-run, however, free market in commodities ensures optimisation of costs and prices.

In order to counter the short-term adverse impact of liberalisation on prices of essential commodities, Government has undertaken active supply management measures and also taken steps to contain the fiscal deficit and growths of money supply. To augment domestic supply of essential commodities, Government have allowed OGL imports of edible oils, sugar, pulses, etc at concessional duties. Government has also undertaken large open market sales of wheat and rice from public stocks.

Bye-lane on NH No.52

375 DR ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to construct a bye-lane on National Highway No 52 at Lakhimpur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T G. VENKATRAMAN) (a) to (c) No Sir. There is no Provision for Lakhimpur bypass in 8th five year plan. Works of improvement to National Highways are being taken up depending upon the availability of funds and Inter-se priority Bypasses have been given lower priority

[Translation]

Concessional Rates of Interest on Loans to SSIs

376 SHRI ANANTH KUMAR .
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH .

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether the Union Government propose to give relaxation in interest rates and accord priority in providing loans to the small scale industries;

(b) if so the details thereof and

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that as per the present interest rate policy, the rate of interest is linked to the quantum of loan and the purpose-wise linkage has been done away with.

RBI has further reported that based on the recommendations of the Nayak Committee, it has simplified the procedure for providing credit to small scale industrial (SSI) units. All commercial banks have been instructed by RBI to sanction working capital limits of less than Rs. one crore to SSI units on the basis of 20% of their projected annual turnover. Banks have also been instructed to give preference to village industries, tiny industries and other small scale units in that order, while meeting the credit requirements of the SSI sector

Price Rise

377 SHRI NITISH KUMAR :
JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether 100 commodities recorded 10 per cent price rise as reported in Daily Tribune dated May 15, 1996.

(b) whether inspite of inflation rate falling down the prices of 33 food products have registered a double digit increase between April, 1995 and March, 1996;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to contain the price rise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) At the end or March, 1996 the Woolesale Price Index stood at 299 5 as against 286 8 a year back, thus registering an annual rise of 4 4 per cent The magnitude of change in Wholesale prices of various commodities during the year from April, 1995 to March 1996 is listed below :

No of Commodities	% Changes
63	No change
84	Negative
72	Less than 5%
80	5-10%
2	10%
120	above 10%
26	Not available
447	

(d) The important steps taken on both demand side and supply side to contain the price rise included :

(1) continuation of open market sale by FCI of rice and wheat through 1995-96,

(2) continuing OGL import policy for sugar, edible oils and pulses at nil or reduced duty.

(3) Import of sugar and edible oils on Government account for augmenting supply through PDS

(4) Reduction of fiscal deficit in the budget for 1995-96 to 5.9% (RE) of GDP

(5) containing monetary growth to less than 15.5 per cent in 1995-96 through a series of measures

Loan Recovery under P.M.R.Y.

378. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether the loans disbursed under Prime Ministers Rojgar Yojana are being recovered as per the schedule

(b) the percentage of its recovery during the last three years State-wise

(c) whether the Union Government propose to review this scheme in view of its poor recovery performance and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d) The Prime Ministers Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) for the educated unemployed youth was launched on 2nd October 1993. Under the PMRY scheme the repayment period is from 3 to 7 years, after initial moratorium of 6 to 18 months. It is therefore, too early to say whether loans disbursed under the scheme are recovered as per the schedule or not

However Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have conducted a quick study in January 1996 of recovery performance of the banks under the scheme. It was observed that the percentage of recovery to demand was 59.44% in respect of cases examined. The scheme is being reviewed periodically at various levels such as by High Power Committee at Government of India level, State PMRY Committees at State level and 'Monitoring Cell' under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Governor, RBI

[English]

Consumer Courts

379. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state the amount of funds released by the Union Government to Consumer Courts during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : With a view to strengthening the infrastructure facilities of the Consumer Courts, Government of India commenced a Central Scheme to grant one-time financial assistance of Rs. 61 crores to the State Governments and U.T. Administrations, to be released in four half-Yearly instalments during 1995-96 and 1996-97. During the first year 1995-96, Rs. 29.98 crores have been released to the States and UTs.

[Translation]

DTC Bus Service

380. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state

(a) the present requirement of buses of the Delhi Transport Corporation to meet the requirement of passengers in the National Capital Territory of Delhi

(b) the steps being taken to meet the existing shortage,

(c) the depot-wise number of buses with Delhi Transport Corporation as on date which are plyworthy or which can be plyworthy and the depot-wise number of buses lying in dilapidated condition,

(d) the average number of buses plying everyday and

(e) the total number of buses likely to be required in Delhi upto 2000 and the manner in which it is proposed to be met?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) So far as DTC is concerned, its fleet strength has been pegged at 3500. The rest of the requirement of buses are being met by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi under various schemes.

(c) The details are given in the statement enclosed

(d) The average number of DTC buses plying on roads every day during the Month of June, 1996 were 1408

(e) The Transport Deptt. of Govt. of NCT of Delhi has not made any projection for requirement of buses for Delhi for 2000 A.D